

Cuba's international activism has been discussed extensively in the intelligence community and academic circles. There is general agreement among Cuban analysts both in and out of government that Cuba's prestige and influence in the Third World and with its Soviet benefactor have benefited considerably from its military actions in Africa. The domestic impact, however, is less clear. For example, the number of Cuban military personnel in Africa (about 35,000) represents about 1.2% of its labor force--nearly twice the percentage of the US labor force stationed in Vietnam (0.65%) in 1968.

Consequently, some observers have been tempted to predict that Africa would prove to be Cuba's "Vietnam," but so far the domestic impact has been manageable. Nevertheless, Cuba does face some major economic and social problems brought on primarily by the low world price of sugar. Moreover, new elite groupings (such as the returning African veterans and the so-called "technocrats") are beginning to make their appearance. Most, however, have yet to attain positions of real influence in the hierarchy. The Cuban power elite (with the exception of the former members of the pre-Castro communist party) is still relatively young. Consequently, the Castro regime is likely to face the pressures of a "revolution of expectations" syndrome over the next decade as a post-revolutionary generation makes increasing demands on a limited political and economic resource base.

1. What has been the economic impact of Cuba's military activities in Africa?

- loss in national output caused by absence of workers
- impact on the labor force
- logistical costs (ship and air transportation of troops)
- hard currency losses from termination of some aid programs by Western nations.
- Soviet support

2. What are the political and social effects of Cuba's African policy?

- level of domestic political support
- sense of pride in Cuban accomplishments
- avenue for career advancement
- formation of a new revolutionary generation

3. What has been the effect on the Cuban military establishment?

- enhanced combat capabilities
- weakened air defense capabilities on the island
- acquisition of new equipment from USSR

4. What are the long term implications assuming that Cuba does not significantly reduce its military role overseas?

- creation of new elite groupings
- rising demands for career advancement
- effects of continued casualties
- long term economic effect

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MEMORANDUM FOR:   
Approved For Release 2005/01/10 : CIA-RDP86B00985R000200180016-5

Attached is a draft explanatory note for the dinner discussion. I have also included a few questions to help focus the discussion. I have attached some of the Center's products which are relevant to the subject. Unfortunately, I could find no academic work which examines this subject exclusively. There are two pieces which discuss the subject in a larger context. One is by Edward Gonzalez (copy attached) and the other is Jorge Dominguez' article in the Fall 1978 issue of Foreign Affairs: "Cuban Foreign Policy" pp. 83-108.



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